

Commercial and Industrial Buildings,
Becker-Hazleton Company Warehouse
280 Iowa Street
Dubuque
Dubuque County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-160-L

HABS
IOWA,
31-DUBU,
13-L-

**PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
P.O. Box 25287
Denver Colorado 80225

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Site Location: 280 Iowa Street
Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa
DOT designation: Resource Site No. 7.9
Cadastral grid: SE1/4 NE1/4 S25 T89N R2E
USGS quadrangle: Dubuque South Iowa 7.5'
UTM coordinates: 15.692020.4707540
Lot dimensions: 40' x 146': .13 acre
Lot description: South 40' of City Lot 745
Present Owner: Iowa Department of Transportation
Present Usage: vacant
Present Condition: fair

Overall Dimensions: 141' x 40'; 7 stories

Orientation: west

Architectural Description: Plan type: 7-story trapezoidal, open-space warehouse.

Foundation: reinforced concrete and coursed ashlar limestone perimeter walls with tooled stone watertable.

Structure: iron/wood frame with brick masonry bearing walls.

Ext. walls: face and common brick laid in common bond.

Roofs: flat composition roof with brick parapet walls; asphalt-shingled shed/gable extending from wall over rear loading platform.

Chimneys: none

Openings: large banks of multi-pane, steel-sash industrial windows, with loose lintels and continuous brick rowlock sills, on 2nd-6th floors, front and 2nd-7th floors, rear; 2/2 wood double-hung windows with semicircular brick arch heads, continuous concrete or stone spring blocks and sills on 7th floor, front; large, fixed sash showcase windows with continuous concrete heads and sills on 1st floor, front; singly placed horizontally sliding sash windows on north; windowless brick party wall on south.

Doorways: simply enframed, single-leaf main entrance with 2-light transom in southwest corner of front; double-leaf entrance door and sliding garage door facing onto rear loading dock.

Details: modestly corbeled brick courses and terra cotta coping tiles on front and side parapets; BECKER-HAZLETON Co. in terra cotta tiles on front above 7th floor windows.

Construction Date : 1914-15

Architecture Style: Chicago Commercial

Physical History : C.H. Becker and H.S. Hazleton formed a crockery and glassware business in 1888, incorporating in Dubuque as the Becker-Hazleton Company in 1903. The firm grew rapidly after incorporation, importing and wholesaling its products throughout the Midwest. "One of the largest commercial institutions in the city is that of Becker-Hazleton Company," a 1911 Dubuque business gazetteer reported. "The firm imports and wholesales crockery, glassware, lamps and china fancy goods. A large amount of wares are brought from England, France, Germany, Austria and Japan. This firm is one of the largest importers in the west, bringing the foreign goods, which come in bond, directly from the European and oriental countries."

By 1914 the company had outgrown its four-story, 30,000-square-foot sales and storage building on Main Street. The partners commissioned Dubuque architect John Spencer to design a large warehouse near the tracks of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad on Iowa Street - the former site of the Dubuque City Mills (1847; 1861) and the Key City Barrel Company (c.1880). The *Dubuque Telegraph-Herald* described the seven-story brick block soon after the design was completed: "The front on Iowa St. will be faced with Hytex facing brick, laid up with arts and crafts joints. The whole of the basement will be built with concrete and masonry, the front wall on Iowa St. up to first floor being faced with native stone, surmounted by Bedford cut stone base. The six stories above the office in front and the whole of the seven stories in the rear will have steel window sash, glazed with wire glass; each window being 13x7 inches, and two of them being placed side by side with only a small pier of brick separately them. The beams and girders supporting the floors will be heavy mill construction and supported on cast iron columns in the first stories; above which the posts will be long leaf southern pine."

Once the plans had been completed, competitive proposals for the building's construction were solicited; low bidder among the eight respondents, prominent Dubuque contractor Anton Zwack was awarded the contract. Zwack, who had completed the similar Dubuque Paper Company Warehouse [HABS No. IA-160-N] four doors north earlier that year, began excavating for the foundations in the fall of 1914, and he completed the building for the reported cost of \$70,000 the following year. The Becker-Hazleton structure displayed straightforward design, with the business offices on the first floor and open-plan warehouse spaces in the basement and on the upper levels. A fire-proof brick shaft enclosed an electric elevator in the northeast corner. The structure had a slightly trapezoidal configuration, with the slanted wall at the rear to accommodate a shipping platform alongside the CM&SPRR siding. The building was occupied without any significant alterations or additions by Becker-Hazleton until about 1960. Since then the Brown Publishing Company has used it as a paper and book warehouse. The Iowa Department of Transportation has recently acquired the property in preparation for construction of a proposed highway.

Significance: Its front curtain wall with long-span banks of industrial-sash windows distinguish the building as a local manifestation of the Chicago-based Commercial style - one of the more noteworthy examples found in Dubuque.

References: Dubuque City Directories: 1857 - 1970.
Sanborn Insurance Maps: 1879, 1884, 1891, 1909, 1972.
Iowa State Gazetteer and Business Directory: 1882-1923.
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Timothy O'Regan, "Old Mills in Dubuque," (unpublished paper), Loras College Library, Dubuque.
H.W. Gardner, *Greater Dubuque* (Dubuque: The Times Journal, 1911), page 55.
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Dubuque Telegraph-Herald: 23 March 1913; 13 September 1914; 27 December 1914; 26 December 1915.

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